

Christmas Day 1885

10 Southwell Gardens

London SW

My dear Gray - It is a curious coincidence that I had addressed the envelope of this letter and enclosed our greeting to Mrs Gray when a midday postman brought a second welcome letter from with one from Mrs Gray to my wife - so I now answer that of 24 Nov. as well as yours of the 14<sup>th</sup> - and further to renew my thanks for the parcel of plants which I received soon after my return & which I found full of interest - especially those of your last journey to the west.

I sent your advice as to the hickories to the Duke of Sermoneta & you may in addition to all your other good deeds have the name of a benefactor to Italy - We have been growling a little that we were not here - let into the secret of the intentions of the transatlantic Botanists for your 75<sup>th</sup> birthday for none among them would more heartily have joined in well earned tributes than many of your friends in this country -

Not only among scientific men, but among all right-minded men, the feeling that we are really portions of one nation under somewhat different institutions is I think now well rooted & the sooner it is openly recognized the better -

I was very glad to hear that Watson's

health is now reestablished - pray convey  
to him my best wishes for the new year -

My wife is not well to day - laid up  
with a bad headache which I trust may  
be only a passing disturbance - I know  
that she intended to write to-day to Mrs Gray  
but unfortunately she cannot even read  
a letter.

You will have received a letter from  
me which must have crossed yours on  
the Atlantic - Chiefly about Kellogg's  
*Saccularia Veatchii* - I think that  
a post-card will suffice for the  
reply. A paper of mine sent to the  
Linnean Soc<sup>y</sup> last July, is at last  
published & I shall of course send you  
a separate copy when I receive them.

I shall be glad to know whether you  
approve of any of my speculations -  
I have another little paper just ready.

I am much indebted to you for the  
plants from Gray's pack & for putting  
my name down for a set of Pringle's  
plants of Chihuahua - He has usually  
sent me a notice as to his collections,  
of which I have had three sets, but  
none has reached me this season -

Hooker is well & cheery - a little put out  
about some friction with official connected

with the new arrangements at Kew, but  
he will be all the better for having nothing  
but his scientific work to think of and  
the difference of income will be nearly  
compensated by the less need for hospitalities  
at Kew which were a constant demand.

How you tempt one with the vision  
of Florida & Texas! - but for many  
reasons I must not think of such  
a thing this year.

I am very glad that the Supplement is  
off your hands and the road clear for  
the Polypetalae - It is all the better  
that materials have now so far  
accumulated, that you have nearly  
all the spoil of the mighty West to  
work upon.

With every best wish for you & Mrs Gray  
affectionately yours

John Ball